

*Medievalizing Victorian Heart(h)s:
A. W. N. Pugin's Medieval Court (1851)*



The Medieval Court

Miguel Alarcão

Universidade Nova de Lisboa/CETAPS

In Memoriam

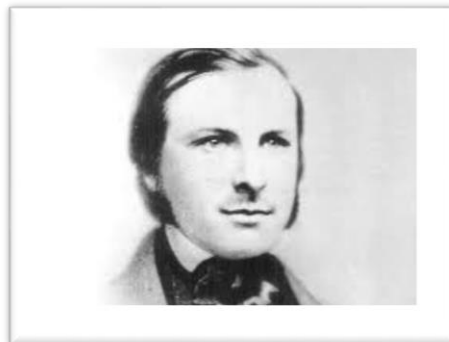
Professor Fernando de Mello Moser (1927-1984)

I

1851, often chosen to signal the beginning of the mid (or high) Victorian period, witnessed The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations; the event, commissioned by Henry Cole (1808-1882) and featuring Prince Albert (1819-1861) as a stately sponsor and a 'royal' patron, was held from May to October at the

¹ Miguel Alarcão's Bio note (1959-) 1981: BA in Modern Languages and Literatures (Portuguese and English Studies); 1986: MA in Anglo-Portuguese Studies; 1996: PhD in English Culture. Degrees awarded by the New University of Lisbon (UNL), where he has been lecturing at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences (FCSH) since 1983, currently holding the post of Associate Professor (since 2001). Colloquial Assistant in Portuguese at the Department of Hispanic Studies of the University of Birmingham (1986-7 to 1988-9). Director of the FCSH's Central Library (Dec. 2001-Sept. 2009), Co-Coordinator of the FCSH's earliest group of researchers in Medieval Studies (1999-2000 to 2003-2004), and Coordinator of the BA in Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures (2009-10 to 2012-13). Publications: Books: *Príncipe dos Ladrões: Robin Hood na Cultura Inglesa* (c. 1377-1837), Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia/Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2001 (PhD dissertation). "'This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle': breve roteiro histórico-cultural da Idade Média inglesa (Séculos V-XV)". Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Anglisticos da Universidade de Lisboa, *Cadernos de Anglistica*, nº 18, 2014 (Web <http://www.ulices.org/images/site/publicacoes/cadernos/CadAngl-18-web.pdf> Co-editions: Miguel Alarcão/Luís Krus/Maria Adelaide Miranda, *Animalia. Presença e Representações*, Edições Colibri, 2002. Luís Krus/Maria Adelaide Miranda/Miguel Alarcão, *A Nova Lisboa Medieval*, Edições Colibri, 2005. Carlos Ceia/Miguel Alarcão/Iolanda Ramos, *Letras & Ciências. As Duas Culturas de Filipe Furtado*. Volume de Homenagem, Casal de Cambra: Caleidoscópio, 2009. Maria Zulmira Castanheira e Miguel Alarcão (org.), *O Rebelde Aristocrata. Nos 200 Anos da Visita de Byron a Portugal*, Porto, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto/Centre for English, Translation and Anglo-Portuguese Studies, "Studies in Classicism and Romanticism", nº 1 (2010) (<<http://ler.letras.up.pt/site/default.aspx?qry=id03id1304id2302&sum=sim>><<http://ler.letras.up.pt/uploads/ficheiros/7802.pdf>>). Other publications: Around 60 articles in *Festschrifts*, proceedings and academic journals like the *Revista de Estudos Anglo-Portugueses* (edited by CETAPS, research unit based at FCSH-UNL) and *Anglo-Saxónica* (edited by CEAUL, based at Arts Faculty, University of Lisbon).

Crystal Palace, "(...) the emblematic hothouse² erected for the exotic plant of Free Trade in the very centre of Hyde Park." (Wilson, p. 127) Drawing on the experience of some national exhibitions, mostly French, the British would be the first international one of its kind, setting an example soon followed by France (1855) and, nearly a century and a half later, by Portugal (1998).



A.W. N. Pugin (1812-1852)

In spite of the overtly modern and universal outlook of the Exhibition, purporting to act as a showcase of the industrial, scientific, technological and artistic primacy attained by the "workshop of the world", it also allocated space to 'Ye olde mediaeval past', through a pavilion designed by A. W. N. Pugin (1812-1852) and decorated with medieval-looking artifacts, secular and religious. Asa Briggs reports:

Set aside from the rest of the Exhibition, 'looking dark and solemn', was Pugin's Medieval Court 'for the display of the taste and art of dead men.' Gothic gloom or Crystal Palace: 1851 had two faces. It was possible to look either forward or backward (...) When the Queen visited the Guild Hall (...) to celebrate (...) the success of the Exhibition, supper was served in the crypt, (...) fitted up (...) as an old baronial hall. Lights were carried by figures in medieval armour. Candles and gaslight and dreams of electricity; medieval armour and Birmingham hardware; pyramids of soap and massive ecclesiastical ornaments, which made the commissioners afraid of cries of 'No Popery' – all these were part of 1851. ("Crystal Palace" p. 47)

² Or "greenhouse", as Pugin defined it (Yarwood, p. 224).

A. N. Wilson comments upon this duality and the 'No Popery' fears,³ a point I shall return to; but, for the time being, suffice it to say that this coexistence of modern and 'auncient' times may be seen as embodying a value traditionally cherished by British culture and civilization --- continuity ---, not to mention that, as Filipe Furtado and Maria Teresa Malafaia point out: "(...) o passado assumiu um papel de relevo, mas não como fuga no tempo, à maneira romântica; olhando-o, (...) como se de um espelho se tratasse, os victorianos demandavam a sua própria imagem nele reflectida, tentando o reconhecimento." (p. 37) But to this quest for (self-) recognition and/or (self-) identification perhaps we might add (self-)awareness as well.

What connections can then be drawn between Victorian times, often described as, inserted into or related to "the age of reform", "the age of progress", "the age of improvement", "the age of machinery", "the age of railway and steam", "the age of iron and glass", etc., and coeval recollections and reconstructions of the 'dark' and 'backward' Middle Ages? Richard Altick, among others,⁴ offers some clues:

Now that the physical and social environment was being transformed, the present seemed to be separated from the past by a (...) more formidable barrier (...). But the widening and

³ "(...) as we have accustomed ourselves to seeing this exhibition as the symbol of nineteenth-century industrial progress and materialism, we turn the corner and – what is this? We are standing in the Medieval Court designed by (...) Pugin, in which we are confronted with Gothic High Altars, hanging lamps, and statues of the Virgin. So strongly did the Medieval Court offend Protestant sensibility that complaints were made to the Prince Consort and the prime minister [John Russell, 1792-1878] and a flood of letters to The Times regarded the erection of a Crucifixion on the Rood Screen as an 'insult to the religion of the country'." (pp. 138-139)

⁴ "The Victorian period was one of unprecedented contrasts: between immense wealth and squalid poverty; between rampant historicism and an almost obsessional quest for a '19th-century style'; between powered vehicles and horse-drawn transport; between glorification of the machine and wholehearted condemnation of the enslaving drudgery it brought; between the spiritual quest and the technological thrust; between complacency and self-criticism, pomposity and humility, and between the earnestness of A. W. N. Pugin and the humour of William Burges [1827-1881]. (...) Momentous advances --- the railways, photography, motor cars, steel and glass technology, wireless telegraphy and electricity --- must be seen against the Victorians' relentless fascination with the past. It was as if they were frightened by their own technical and industrial prowess and felt a need to reassure themselves by going back in history for their styles. It was not until late in the 19th century that the Victorians began to unshackle themselves from slavish historicism and move towards truly progressive design. While the majority of styles were based on historical reinterpretations of one form or another, the huge surge of technical development affected both the kinds of objects that were made and the way in which they were fashioned. (...) Similarly, collectors of medieval art (...) encouraged the re-use of fragments of carving and panelling in Victorian furniture, or the accurate copying of medieval details in metal or stone." (Riley, pp. 8-9)

deepening sense of history (...) reinforced the sense of continuity that was being weakened by the disappearance of physical links with the past. (...) Medievalism, (...) or what passed for it, was (...) deeply embedded in the Victorian spirit, doubtless because the need for some (...) tie with the (...) past had become all the more pressing with the advance of materialism and secularism. (...) But there was a more pressing reason for this recurrent evocation (...): the wish to discover (...) a society more stable and equitable, an intellectual temper more unified and free of doubt (...). The faster the rate of change and the more bewildering their orientation became (...), the more some Victorians longed for a fixed order. The Middle Ages, they persuaded themselves, had provided (...) a spiritual terra firma for the people who had lived then. Change was so slow as to be negligible; cathedrals took centuries to build. (pp. 101-105 passim)

Speaking of cathedrals, I shall briefly set Pugin in the religious context of the early Victorian period, as well as his role and standing in the Gothic Revival movement, of which he was probably the main exponent between Sir Walter Scott (1771-1831) and John Ruskin (1819-1900). Indeed, Pugin's consistent textual apologies and architectural campaigns for the principles of authenticity, truth and honesty⁵ would be taken up by the Coniston sage, notably in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849)⁶ and *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53).⁷ But, as Christopher Howse noted:

Pugin was Ruskin and Brunel [⁸] rolled into one. Like Ruskin, he climbed over cathedral roofs and up teetering ladders to capture in pencil the details of the Middle Ages. Like Brunel, he did things, day and night: visiting, writing, arguing, building, pushing on, short of money, short of backers and always short of time. (n. pg.)

II

Among Pugin's early medieval influences, one should mention a visit to Lincoln, as well as to French cathedrals, like Rouen and Rheims. In 1829, when he

⁵ Chris Brooks sums it up as "(...) architectural truth – truth to structure, to function and to material." (p. 240).

⁶ As Kenneth Clark points out, "*The Seven Lamps* was written in the winter of 1848. Pugin's *Contrasts*, which anticipates it at many points, was published in 1836. Ruskin never acknowledged any indebtedness to Pugin, and spoke of him with contempt, but the possibility of influence cannot be ruled out." (*Ruskin*, ed. Kenneth Clark p. 125, n.1); see also *infra*, n.15.

⁷ Some selected passages from Ruskin's influential chapter "The Nature of Gothic" can be found in Haight, ed., pp. 586-595 or Ruskin, ed. Philip Davis, pp. 188-257.

⁸ Isambard Kingdom Brunel (1806-1859), a Victorian engineer and entrepreneur and thus an epitome of the "gospel of work" ethos extolled by Samuel Smiles (1812-1904).

was seventeen, the British Parliament under a Tory Cabinet headed by the Duke of Wellington (1769-1852) passed the Catholic Emancipation Act, and Pugin's conversion would take place in Salisbury,⁹ in 1835, three centuries after the execution of Sir Thomas More (c.1478-1535) and ten years before another, and more famous, conversion (1845): John Henry Newman's (1801-1890).¹⁰ From then on, starting with *Contrasts* (1836), Pugin would advocate the existence of a direct, intimate and powerful relationship between the moral values and religious beliefs and practices of any given society and its contemporary architectural styles.

Being in activity from the 1830s onwards, it would be stimulating to dwell on the possible connections between the birth and growth of Pugin's Catholic mind and the Oxford and Ecclesiological Movements springing up in Oxbridge Britain in the 1830s and 1840s.¹¹ Irrespective, however, of that research, one must stress the messages and meanings that, according to Pugin, medieval --- and, particularly, Gothic --- architecture (built before England's religious break with Rome) still held for modern times,¹² a period he may have considered as one of "devotional void" (Newsome 183), in spite of the confessional diversity available within British Christianity. Indeed, to Pugin, architecture (and art in general) was not only the embodiment, expression and mirror of the moral condition of coeval societies; he also argued for a close association between faith, spirituality, perfection and

⁹ Whose cathedral had been 'restored' by James Wyatt (1746-1813), a major name in the history of the early Gothic Revival, though often vilified by later architects, art historians and critics, Pugin included.

¹⁰ Not to mention Cardinal Henry Manning (1808-1892), who converted to Roman Catholicism in 1851 (the very year of the Great Exhibition) and was nominated Archbishop of Westminster (1865-1892), succeeding to Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman (1802-1865).

¹¹ Speaking of Oxford, any general overview of the Tractarian movement would cover such tenets of the *Tracts for the Times* (1835-1841) as a reluctance to political or state intervention, especially of a reformist, liberal or utilitarian kind, in matters ecclesiastical; the assertion of the historical continuity of the Church in England, thereby somehow linking the Church of England with her medieval Catholic predecessor; the search for theological compatibilities between the Catholic creed and the 39 Articles; the stress laid on sacraments, decoration and ritual in worship, etc. Moving on to Cambridge, mention should be made of the foundation, in 1839, by John Mason Neale (1816-1866) and Benjamin Webb (1819-1885), of the Cambridge Camden Society (whose designation would change, in 1846, to The Ecclesiological Society) and its journal, *The Ecclesiologist* (1841-1868), both conservatively bent on normative prescriptions on, and traditionalist evaluations of, religious architecture, decoration and performance.

¹² Throughout his written works, Pugin draws a parallel and establishes a sharp contrast between the Reformation, (the survival and/or revival of) classical styles and what he calls the "destructive" principle of "paganism" and Catholic Christianity, gothic or "pointed" architecture and medieval piety.

beauty¹³ and he passionately believed Gothic to be the only truly Christian style --- ergo its moral, as well as aesthetic, superiority¹⁴ --- or, in his own words, " (...) not a style, but a principle" (*True Principles*, p. 44). Finally, Pugin's claims for the authenticity, functionality, fitness and purpose of all the elements and materials present in a building (ornament included)¹⁵ would also be voiced by John Ruskin.¹⁶

Now if we consider Pope Pius IX's¹⁷ decision, on 29th September 1850, to restore the Catholic administrative and episcopal structure in England (the "Papal Aggression"), as suggested to the Pontiff by Nicholas Wiseman (1802-1865)¹⁸ --- author of *Fabiola* (1854) and the first Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster ---, it

¹³ "(...) the great test of Architectural beauty is the fitness of the design to the purpose for which it is intended, and (...) the style of a building should so correspond with its use that the spectator may at once perceive the purpose for which it was erected." (Pugin, *Contrasts*, p. 1)

¹⁴ A few quotes from *Contrasts* may help to prove the point. Thus, "Pointed or Christian Architecture has far higher claims on our admiration than mere beauty or antiquity; (...) in it alone we find the faith of Christianity embodied, and its practices illustrated." (*Ibidem* pp. 2-3); "Christian art was the natural result of the progress of Catholic feeling and devotion; and its decay was consequent on that of the faith itself; and all revived classic buildings, whether erected in Catholic or Protestant countries, are evidences of a lamentable departure from true Catholic principles and feelings (...)" (*Ibidem* p. 7); and "As it is, everything glorious about the English churches is Catholic, everything debased and hideous, Protestant." (*Ibidem* p. 51) Edward Norman describes *Contrasts* as "(...) a moral treatise: observing bad social and religious values attached to modern neo-classicism, and Catholic virtue expressed in the Gothicism of the past." (p. 76)

¹⁵ "The two great rules for design are these: 1st, that there should be no features about a building which are not necessary for convenience, construction, or propriety; 2nd, that all ornament should consist of enrichment of the essential construction of the building." (*True Principles*, p. 1) and "In pure architecture the smallest detail should have a meaning or serve a purpose; and even the construction itself should vary with the material employed, and the designs should be adapted to the material in which they are executed." (*Ibidem*). Pugin's notion of "propriety" is further clarified some pages on: "(...) the internal and external appearance of an edifice should be illustrative of, and in accordance with, the purpose for which it is destined." (*Ibidem* p. 42) Finally, he adds: "How many objects of ordinary use are rendered monstrous and ridiculous simply because the artist, instead of seeking the most convenient form, and then decorating it, has embodied some extravagance to conceal the real purpose for which the article has been made!" (*Ibidem* p. 23)

¹⁶ To Kenneth Clark, "(...) Pugin laid the two foundation stones of that (...) system which dominates nineteenth-century art criticism and is immortalized in the Seven Lamps of Architecture: the value of a building depends on the moral worth of its creator; and a building has a moral value independent of, and more important than, its esthetic value." (p. 149); see also his statement that "If Ruskin had never lived, Pugin would never have been forgotten." (p. 144) and, finally, Alexander, p. 72.

¹⁷ 1792-1878; Pope 1846-78.

¹⁸ "In 1847 the new pope (...) had approved in principle the idea, put to him by Nicholas Wiseman, that English Roman Catholicism -- hitherto organized as a mission Church under the care of vicars-apostolic -- should be administered differently. England should be divided into Catholic dioceses, taking their names not from the ancient or medieval sees of York, Exeter, Salisbury etc. but chiefly from the modern industrial centres -- Birmingham, Liverpool, Nottingham, Northampton, Plymouth and so on." (Wilson p. 139); it should be added that, since the mid-1840s, the population of some major cities had swollen due to the arrival of Irish Catholic immigrants fleeing from the famine and the devastating economic and social effects caused by the crises in potato production. However, as David Mathew points out, the system of Catholic vicariates in England had already been reformed and expanded (from four to eight) in 1840 (p. 145 and p. 198).

would be relevant to read (beyond) the 'signs of the times' and reassess the suspicions and fears of renewed 'Popish plots' in mid-19th century Britain.¹⁹ Hidden in the wings of the Romish Dove, or behind the curtains of the Gothic Revival, could there also be a Catholic revival on its way, with Pugin as one of its 'apostles' or 'high priests'?²⁰ True, the spirit behind the Papal letter (*Universalis Ecclesiae*)²¹ would be curtailed, on 1st August, 1851, by Lord Russell's Ecclesiastical Titles Act,²² but even so the hypothesis would warrant further enquiries on Pugin's motivation and participation in the event,²³ as suggested by a blogger:

Why was Pugin allowed to construct a medieval court, 'with wild Gothic longings for pre-Reformation Catholicism and trappings (...)' (New Statesman, Dec. 1999). Many Anglican critics must have (...) feared a Catholic resurgence in England. Secondly why did Pugin

¹⁹ "As the old Catholics had predicted, the creation of the (...) sees of Liverpool and Birmingham provided the No Popery brigade with the excuse for mass hysteria. The papal brief reached the English press in (...) October 1850. By Guy Fawkes Day the crowds were ready to express their anti-Catholic sentiments in traditional fashion. Some Catholic churches had their windows broken. In many places, Wiseman --- or the pope --- or both --- were burnt in effigy." (Wilson, p. 141)

²⁰ "It is now, indeed, time to break the chains of Paganism which have enslaved the Christians of the last three centuries, and diverted the noblest powers of their minds, from the pursuit of truth to the reproduction of error." (Pugin, *Contrasts*, p. 16); "One ray of hope alone darts through (...); that, ere the fatal hour arrives, so many devout and thinking men may have returned to Catholic unity, that hearts and hands may be found willing and able to protect these glorious piles from further profanation, and (...) restore them to their original glory and worship." (*Ibidem*, p. 45); and "(...) I cannot dismiss this subject without a few remarks on those who seem to think, that, by restoring the details and accessories of pointed architecture, they are reviving Catholic art. Not at all. Unless the ancient arrangement be restored, and the true principles carried out, all mouldings, pinnacles, traceries, and detail, be they ever so well executed, are a mere disguise." (*Ibidem*, p. 57) Pugin's final words in *True Principles* also deserve to be quoted: "Let then the Beautiful and the True be our watchword for future exertions in the overthrow of modern paltry taste and paganism, and the revival of Catholic art and dignity." (p. 67)

²¹ "The eight districts of 1840 had been the London, Western, Eastern, Central, Welsh, Lancashire, Yorkshire, and Northern; the sees of 1851 were Westminster, Beverley, Birmingham, Clifton, Hexham (later Hexham and Newcastle), Liverpool, Newport and Menevia, Northampton, Nottingham, Plymouth, Salford, Shrewsbury and Southwark. The title of Beverley disappeared in 1878 when the diocese was divided between the new sees of Leeds and Middlesbrough." (Mathew 199, n.1; see map in Reynolds, p. 328)

²² "On the tide of prejudice which Wiseman and the pope had provoked, Lord John brought before Parliament legislation to make the new Catholic dioceses illegal. (...) A very great deal of parliamentary time in the first half of 1851 was devoted to the promotion of Lord John's bill (...). The law they passed --- the Ecclesiastical Titles Act --- was so absurd that no one was ever prosecuted by its terms and Gladstone (...) repealed it in 1871. But all this was going on while Pugin erected his Madonnas and crucifixes, his roods and dossals and reredoses in the Crystal Palace in 1851." (Wilson, p. 142; see also Mathew, p. 199, Reynolds, pp. 335-36 and Briggs, "The Crystal Palace", p. 25 and pp. 32-37 *passim*)

²³ According to Andresen Leitão, "Pugin acreditava que a popularização do neogótico resultaria numa idêntica expansão da fé católica nas Ilhas Britânicas. A lógica desta crença (...) escapa-nos (...), mas o facto é que se tornara uma referência no mundo do design. A sua Corte Medieval [sic] era um fenómeno de popularidade junto dos visitantes (...), embora (...) uma imitação pouco atraente do estilo gótico original." (pp. 62-63)

agree to work in a setting (...) that must have felt repugnant to him? He certainly prepared his (...) Court with his normal attention to detail and in the end (...) won the prestigious (...) Great Exhibition Prize Medal. But a medieval court hardly fitted in with the pro-science, pro-industry and modernist architectural attitudes of the (...) Exhibition. (Hels, 2009: n. p.)

If one looks at Pugin's main publications and overall activity, architecture, decoration and furniture²⁴ loom very large, inviting a comparison with his father, the French Catholic expatriate Auguste Charles Pugin (1769-1832). But it is now time to set off to London. 'Full steam', in proper Victorian fashion.

III

In order to focus on Pugin's contribution to the Great Exhibition, materialized in the conception and decoration of the Medieval Court, I shall discard other projects and buildings like Scarisbrick Hall, Lancashire; St. Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham; St. Mary's, Warwick Bridge, nr. Carlisle; St. Giles', Cheadle, Staffordshire; Alton Castle (or Towers), Staffordshire, for the Catholic 16th Earl of Shrewsbury, Pugin's major patron and to whom *An Apology* was warmly dedicated; and, finally, St. Augustine's, Ramsgate,²⁵ next to "The Grange", Pugin's last home. I shall likewise leave aside Pugin's role in the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament after the fire of 1834, immortalized in J. M. W. Turner's (1775-1851) celebrated oil paintings. As is well known, Sir Charles Barry (1795-1860) gets most of the credit for the 'Phoenix-like' resurrection of Westminster Palace (Clark, pp. 129-133), leaving Pugin in the background; however, the mere existence of a team of artisans and craftsmen at work in the Palace²⁶ allows us to connect Pugin with the Arts and Crafts movement,

²⁴ According to Clark, in 1827, "(...) he [Pugin] designed new furniture for the restored Windsor Castle"(124), an information endorsed by Alexander (p. 66) and Aldrich (p. 143), who reminds us that "Windsor Castle is the only residence of the modern British monarchs to date from the Middle Ages (...)" (*Ibidem*, p. 93). Windsor remains a major stage for performing and promoting British monarchical and chivalric traditions and loyalties.

²⁵ According to David Watkin, "He [Pugin] built this entirely out of his own pocket at a cost of £20,000 and gave it to the Catholic Bishop of Southwark." (p. 159) Pugin's Catholicism is further attested by the location of St. Augustine's, Ramsgate corresponding approximately to the landing place of Augustine of Canterbury, Pope Gregory I's envoy to the kingdom of Kent (pp. 596-97).

²⁶ John Gregory Crace (?-?), John Hardman Sr. (1767-1844) and Jr. (1811-1867), George Myers (1803-1875) and Herbert Minton (1793-1858).

associated with William Morris (1834-1896)²⁷ and "The Firm",²⁸ and paramount in the decoration of well-off late Victorian households.²⁹

As far as the Exhibition is concerned, Christopher Howse argues:

It was Pugin's triumph there that pushed him over the edge. In that vast crystal showroom of everything modern – looms and iron pianos, brewer's vats and reaping machines – nothing caught the eye (...) more than Pugin's Medieval Court, dominated by the font and a huge stove, cased in Minton tiles and protected by wrought iron so that it looked like a saint's shrine. There were textiles, glass, wallpaper and ceramics – all sure to make any Victorian villa truly Medieval. 'He has marvellously fulfilled his own intention,' declared the Illustrated London News, 'of demonstrating the applicability of medieval art in all its richness and variety to uses of the present day.' (n. pg.)



The Great Exhibition, 1851

²⁷ "Pugin (...) pioneered, without theorizing it, the (...) working relationship between individual craft and design and high-volume workshop production for which Morris is admired." (Alexander, p. 72) Pugin also resembles Morris in that they were both 'workaholics', although Pugin died much younger than Morris, aged 40. Megan Aldrich claims that "(...) with the death of Pugin the Gothic Revival lost the greatest practitioner it has ever known, and some of the spirit and vigour of the Revival departed with him." (p. 173)

²⁸ Morris, Marshall, Faulkner and Co. (1861), later Morris and Co. (1875); actually, like Clive Wainwright recalls, "Pugin was setting new standards for craftsmen and reviving lost craft techniques twenty years before Morris and Co. was founded." (*Apud* Alexander, p. 72). Steven Adams, to whom "A survey of the Arts and Crafts, from its origins in the writings of Pugin, Carlyle and Ruskin (...) shows that it is nothing if not diverse. (...) Under the protection of Pugin, art's purpose was to revive the architectural idiom of the Middle Ages and with it the finer spirituality of the period." (p. 124), also mentions and includes Pugin in the chapter entitled "The Founding Fathers" (*Ibidem*, pp. 19-20).

²⁹ As Roderick O'Donnell argues in his introduction, "Pugin was to be at his most influential in reforming the practice of the Gothic Revival and domestic architecture of what (...) he called the 'middle class' home, and his revolutionary influence on its construction, planning and decoration was first demonstrated in his own house, St. Augustine's Grange, Ramsgate (1843). Pugin thus stands at the wellspring of nineteenth-century architectural and design reform, which was to be reflected in the institution that would become the Victoria & Albert Museum, the publications of Ruskin, and in the architecture and decorative programme of William Morris." (Pugin, *True Principles*, p. ix)

The Great Exhibition inspired the edition of an official catalogue in four volumes, listing all the items on display and their places of origin, while, at the same time, illustrating the Victorians' acknowledged love for collecting objects, memorabilia and bric-à-brac. In the section "Iron and hardware – Class 22", Robert Hunt's *Companion* describes Pugin's Court:

(...) in which will be found contributed by different manufacturers, many beautiful illustrations of church decoration, and furniture in the mediaeval style. Here (...) the glass manufacturer and the chemist unite to furnish forth the fine effects of the stained glass window. The quarries of Caen have furnished the materials for the stone carvings, and the clays of Cornwall (...) the tesserae and tiles; and here is also elaborately carved oak furniture, and inlaid woods, with splendid examples of the art of the brass founder, (...) giving permanence to the delicate designs of the artist. Although (...) this division has been associated with metal manufacture, it is only really so, as far as its elaborate brass fittings are concerned, (...) the display of altar plate and appointments [e]ntering largely into its attractions. Rich stuffs, paper hangings, chintzes, and carpets, combine to enhance the general effect, and each will naturally receive (...) all that attention which arises from the effect produced by the judicious combination of material. (p. 23)³⁰

Unfortunately, it is difficult to find pictures, prints and/or engravings of the Medieval Court, located on the ground floor, almost facing the monument to Edward III's Queen, Philippa of Hainault, whose character had been impersonated by Victoria in a ball held at Buckingham Palace in 1842 (Girouard, pp. 112-13).³¹ Some images can, however, be found in the Internet.³²

³⁰ The *Companion* also mentions, in "Furniture - Class 26", "(...) a Renaissance bedstead in walnut, and other articles in the same style, (...) much in imitation of the oak furniture of the Middle Ages (...)" (*Ibidem*, p. 41), "A sideboard of carved oak, the back representing the signing of Magna Charta, the panels worked in tapestry, (...) sent from Jersey (...)" (*Ibidem*, pp. 46-47) and, finally, in the "North Gallery", "(...) specimens of carving in walnut and in English oak; one piece taking for its subject the Canterbury Pilgrims of Chaucer, at the Tabard, in Southwark; another good example being the carved oak pulpit." (*Ibidem*, p. 50) Pugin's views on, and criticism of, the Gothic furniture of his day are succinctly expressed in *The True Principles*, together with Pugin's open and honourable contrition for errors made in his youth, during his Windsor assignment (pp. 40-42)

³¹ See Sir Edwin Landseer's oil painting Queen Victoria and Prince Albert at the Costume Ball of 12 May 1842, dated 1844.

³² Source: Louis Haghe's chromolithograph, entitled *The Medieval Court in the Great Exhibition*, published in Dickinson's Views of the Great Exhibition and reproduced in Brooks 248 (no. 145). This lithograph is, however, credited to Joseph Nash by Megan Aldrich (p. 170).



The Crystal Palace, Hyde Park

When the Crystal Palace, re-erected in Sydenham Hill (1854), was destroyed by fire in 1936, just over a century after its Westminster namesake, Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965) lamented what he considered to be "the end of an age". In fact, over and above any political and religious intentions and statements, Pugin's 'crusade' for the preservation of the architectural, ornamental and decorative memories of the Middle Ages can still teach us how to prevent helpless and hopeless mourning for lost legacies and irretrievable pasts; if only because, as John Keats (1795-1821) reminds us, in the opening lines of *Endymion* (1818):

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever:
 Its loveliness increases; it will never
 Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
 Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing. (Cook, ed., p. 61)

Works Cited

ADAMS, Steven. *The Arts & Crafts Movement*. North Dighton, MA: J G Press Inc., 1996 (London: Quintet Publishing Limited, 1987).

ALDRICH, Megan. *Gothic Revival*. London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1997 (1994).

ALEXANDER, Michael. *Medievalism. The Middle Ages in Modern England*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007.

ALTICK, Richard D. *Victorian People and Ideas*. New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1973.

BEST, Geoffrey. *Mid-Victorian Britain, 1851-1870*. [London?]: Fontana/Collins, 1979 (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971).

BOTTO, Maria Isabel Donas. "A Grande Exposição de 1851: 'The Great Bazaar in Kensington' ou 'A Lesson in Taste'". *Actas do XVI Encontro da APEAA – Associação Portuguesa de Estudos Anglo-Americanos* (16-18.03.1995). Ed. Isabel Alves *et al.* Vila Real: Universidade de Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, 1996. Pp. 267-279.

BRIGGS, Asa. *The Age of Improvement, 1783-1867*. London and New York: Longman, "A History of England", 1993 (1959).

------. "The Crystal Palace and the Men of 1851". *Victorian People. A Reassessment of Persons and Themes 1851-67*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1990. Pp. 23-59 (? : Odhams Press, 1954).

------. "London, The World City". *Victorian Cities*. Harmondsworth: Pelican Books Ltd., 1987. Pp. 311-360 (? : Odhams Press, 1963).

BROOKS, Chris. *The Gothic Revival*. London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1999.

BURCHELL, S. C. *Age of Progress*. Nederland: Time-Life International, "Great Ages of Man – A History of the World's Cultures", 1971 (Time Inc., 1966).

CLARK, Kenneth. *The Gothic Revival. An Essay in the History of Taste*. ? : John Murray, 1975 (? : Constable, 1928).

COOK, Elizabeth, ed. *John Keats*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, "The Oxford Authors", 1990.

FURTADO, Filipe and Maria Teresa Malafaia, eds. *O Pensamento Victoriano. Uma Antologia de Textos*. Lisboa: Edições 70, Lda., 1992.

GIROUARD, Mark. *The Return to Camelot. Chivalry and the English Gentleman*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981.

HELS, "The Great Exhibition of London and Augustus Pugin". *Art and Architecture, mainly. The fine arts, decorative arts and architecture of Britain and its Empire, Europe, the Mediterranean and North America, 1640-1940*. <<http://melbourneblogger.blogspot.pt/2009/01/great-exhibition-london-and-augustus.html>>. 15 January 2009. Access 20 July 2014.

HOUGHTON, Walter E. *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985 (1957).

HOWSE, Christopher, "Pugin: The man who made the Steam Age medieval", <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/architecture/9090312/Pugin-the-man-who-made-the-Steam-Age-medieval.html> 18 February 2012. Access 20 July 2014.

HUNT, Robert. *Companion to the Official Catalogue. Synopsis of the Contents of the Great Exhibition of 1851*. Bibliobazaar, n. d. (London: Spicer Brothers, and W. Clowes and Sons, 1851).

LEITÃO, Nicolau Andresen. *Exposições Universais – Londres 1851*. Lisboa: Expo 98, 1994.

LEWIS, Michael J. *The Gothic Revival*. London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., "World of Art", 2002.

MATHEW, David. *Catholicism in England. The Portrait of a Minority: Its Culture and Tradition*. 2nd. ed. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1948 (1936).

NEWSOME, David. *The Victorian World Picture. Perceptions and Introspections in an Age of Change*. London: Fontana Press, 1998 (? John Murray, 1997).

NORMAN, Edward. *Roman Catholicism in England from the Elizabethan Settlement to the Second Vatican Council*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, "Opus", 1986 (1985).

PUGIN, Augustus Welby. *Contrasts: or, A Parallel between the Noble Edifices of the Middle Ages, and Corresponding Buildings of the Present Day; Shewing the Present Decay of Taste*. 2nd. ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, "Cambridge Library Collection", 2013 (London: Charles Dolman, 1841; orig. ed. 1836).

-----, *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture and An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture*. Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing Publishing, 2003 (*True Principles...*, London: J. M. Weale, 1841; *An Apology...*, London: J. M. Weale, 1843).

PURBRICK, Louise, ed. *The Great Exhibition of 1851. New Interdisciplinary Essays*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, "Texts-in-Culture", 2013 (2001).

REYNOLDS, E. E. *The Roman Catholic Church in England and Wales. A Short History*. Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire: Anthony Clarke Books, 1973.

RILEY, Noël. *Victorian Design Source Book*. London: Grange Books, 1997.

RUSKIN, John. *Lectures on Art*. New York: Allworth Press, "Aesthetics Today", 1996.

------. *Selected Writings*. Ed. Kenneth Clark. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1991 (Ruskin Today. ? : John Murray, by arrangement with Penguin Books Ltd., 1964).

------. *Selected Writings: Modern Painters. The Stones of Venice. The Seven Lamps of Architecture. Praeterita*. Ed. Philip Davis. London: J. M. Dent/Vermont, Charles E. Tuttle Co. Inc., "Everyman", 1995.

SOMMER, Robin Langley, ed. *The Arts and Crafts Movement*. London: Grange Books, 1995.

YARWOOD, Doreen. *The Architecture of Britain*. London: B. T. Batsford, 1980 (1976).

WATKIN, David. *English Architecture. A Concise History*, London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., "World of Art", 2001 (1979).

WILLIAMS, Raymond "Art and Society". *Culture and Society, 1780-1950*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with Chatto & Windus, 1977. 137-161 (Chatto & Windus, 1958).

WILSON, A. N. *The Victorians*. London: Arrow Books, 2002 (Hutchinson, 2002).

WOOD, Anthony. *Nineteenth Century Britain 1815-1914*. 2nd. ed. Harlow: Longman Group UK Ltd., 1986 (1960).

Texto apresentado no II Congresso Internacional "Victorians Like Us - The Victorian Household: Power, Policies, Practices" (26-29.11.2014), organizado pelo Centro de Estudos Anglísticos da Universidade de Lisboa.

ABSTRACT

Medievalizing Victorian Heart(h)s: A. W. N. Pugin's Medieval Court (1851)

1851, is a date often chosen to signal the beginning of the mid-Victorian period, witnessed the "Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations", featuring Albert, the Prince Consort (1819-1861), as a stately sponsor and a 'royal' patron. In spite of the modern and universal outlook of the Exhibition, purporting to act as a showcase of the industrial, technological and artistic primacy attained by the "workshop of the world", propped up and sustained by economic, financial, commercial and colonial infrastructures and networks, it also allocated space to 'Ye olde mediaeval past', through a pavilion designed by A. W. N. Pugin (1812-1852) and decorated with medieval-looking artifacts. What relationships or articulations, if any, can then be drawn between Pugin's 19th century present and his cherished medieval past?; or between Victorian times, often referred to as "the age of progress" and/or "the age of improvement", and the inspirational recollection of the 'dark' and 'backward' Middle Ages?

KEYWORDS

A. W. N. Pugin; Great Exhibition (1851); Medieval Court; Anglo-Catholicism.